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The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington D. C. 20585

September 4, 2001

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Dear Secretary Abraham,

I received a missive from your underling Lake H. Barrett, Acting Director of the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, encouraging me to respond to a list of suggested topics for public comment on Yucca Mountain. I applaud him for thinking he might be able to steer my comments into your staid platform, but I prefer to choose my own outline. I also refuse to support a process that has been a sham and a disgrace long before you came upon the scene.

Any comments I have on Yucca Mountain must be wed with my overall view of our nation's energy policy, which can be found within the Department of Energy's records from the Formal Public Hearing in Chicago, Illinois on February 1, 2000. In them you will find that I view our energy policy as symptomatic of a larger societal ill.

I cannot comprehend why a primarily Christian nation would choose to mire itself into the bosom of an industry that is killing us all... slowly, deliberately, without conscience or shame. Why must we burden ourselves with having to chaperone tons of lethal nuclear waste for thousands of generations, when we could be embracing cleaner technologies NOW that, if systematically and deliberately phased in, would really free this nation from the dependent slave to imports that we have allowed ourselves to become?

You will of course answer correctly that the waste is already here. That is true, but the current national energy policy does nothing to alleviate this situation. Unless you systematically close down aging nuclear plants now instead of pushing through their ill-advised operation license extensions, you will condemn yet again more generations to be stewards of your lethal effluent as you authorize its continued production well into the next millennium.

Yes, Congress voted to ultimately agree to take possession of the waste, but in your haste to railroad this through you have apparently chosen to ignore the United States Constitution's Fifth Amendment protections that guarantee citizens have reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard on decisions this grave. You also uphold a process already tainted with contractor scandals and government investigations. Whose bed shall you sleep in tonight?

Instead of dismissing the whole democratic process with a few patronizing public hearings, even those offered with the added indignity of poor logistics, insulting short public notice, canceled venues and wrong addresses, the DOE should be diligently and enthusiastically calling for public hearings along every transportation route throughout every state in the nation. Anything less is far too insulting to even discuss. Perhaps you consider the task a bit too daunting.

The most telling story in this whole debasement of humanity is the inherent, blatant, offensive, and arrogant environmental racism permeating every fiber of this proposal and the fiber of every human being involved in its administration.

Please correct me if I'm wrong. Our government has lied, cheated, swindled, and stolen, not just this precious piece of land called Yucca Mountain, but this whole continent from its indigenous peoples. What land left them by treaty, which was thought to be useless anyway, was taken back

when some previously unknown precious commodity was discovered. Now, with fifty years of nuclear garbage piling up, unsound science is constructed to cover the geologic evidence that condemns Yucca Mountain as an inadequate permanent repository location and in order to hide our Big Mistake somewhere out of sight.

After all, it is only the Western Shoshone Nation. Heaven forbid we should have to look at it, here in the front yards and back yards of Americana, perched precariously along shores of fresh water lakes and rivers, growing cask by cask, lining up like sentries as testament to our utter stupidity and monuments to our greed, ignorance, and selfishness, spit-shined and promoted as Patriotic and The American Way.

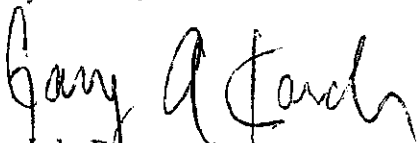
The most scientifically sound protocol suggests that we leave the waste that has already been generated in place where it was created. The current casts in use are, I thought, licensed for a hundred years. Is there some reason why they can't be trusted to stay where they are? Some of the radioactive material will also have broken down to become less hazardous if left in place. All shipments at that time, say a hundred years from now, will already be less radioactive and therefore less problematic to transport to a permanent site, should one ever be determined.

I cannot comprehend why the DOE would not want to capitalize on clean technologies that could be marketed to developing nations, instead of promoting the new round of global nukes being thrust upon the world citizenry, which will do nothing more than to change the current dilemma in the United States into an even more global one, with plutonium and its various and sundry byproducts and radioactive vomit being continuously moved around the world and inevitably into the hands of an even more stupid rogue nation with an attitude and an agenda.

Not too many years ago, you proclaimed that the Department of Energy should be dismantled. Now through political connections you are in charge of that very department, overseeing the very operations you once considered worthless. Unlike yourself, who comes to the table as a Johnny-come-very-lately, I have been a passionately active environmentalist for my entire adult life, even before I attended the very first Earth Day 31 years ago as a young college student. I find it insulting for those of us who are disturbed by the poisoning of our own species, including our own children and of all life on earth, that we must have our valid concerns weighed by such an uncaring overseer as yourself. I pray that you are not so grateful for your politically motivated position that you choose not to give this whole scenario the serious second and third hard look it so deserves.

Those of us engaged in the fight against nuclear interests are not The Bad Guys. We are not Communist. We deserve to be considered among the most patriotic and God-fearing citizens this country has ever seen. We support true, pure, unobstructed citizen input in the democratic process. We abhor anything less. We are better Homo sapiens than that.

Sincerely,
Gary A. Karch



Cc: Lake Barrett
Carol Hanlon